

REMARKS

Claims 2-3 have been canceled. Claims 1, 4, 8, and 10 have been amended. Claims 1 and 4-15 are pending in the case. Further examination and reconsideration of pending claims 1 and 4-15 are hereby respectfully requested.

Section 103(a) Rejections

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,797,975 to Nishiyama et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,661,850 to Solarz.

To expedite prosecution, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the allowed subject matter from claim 3 and intervening claim 2 thereby rendering rejections of claim 1 moot. Claim 2 was, therefore, canceled thereby rendering its rejection moot.

In light of the form amendments to claim 1, which now contains allowable subject matter, Applicant respectfully requests removal of the § 103 rejections of claim 1.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 14-15 were allowed. Claims 3-13 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As noted above, the allowable subject matter of claim 3 and intervening claim 2 was incorporated into independent claim 1. Applicants sincerely appreciate the Examiner's recognition of allowable subject matter in these claims and await allowance of the remaining claims in the case.

CONCLUSION

This response constitutes a complete response to all issues raised in the Office Action mailed December 1, 2005. In addition, the art cited but not relied upon is not believed to be pertinent to the patentability of the present claims. In view of the remarks presented herein, Applicants assert that pending claims 1 and 4-15 are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner

has any questions, comments, or suggestions, the undersigned earnestly requests a telephone conference.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any required fees and credit any overpayment to deposit account number 50-3268/5589-11400.

Respectfully submitted,



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